

Message Text

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42

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ADP-00 IO-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 T-03 OMB-01 AID-20 GAC-01 ACDA-19

RSR-01 MC-02 SAJ-01 MBFR-03 /181 W
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R 151100 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9799

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0317

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS MCAP XF YO LY

SUBJECT: YUGOSLAV ARMS SALES TO " PALESTINIAN AIR FORCE"

1. DURING COURSE TOUR D' HORIZON WITH EMBOFF MARCH 14, FRENCH COUNSELOR FOR MILITARY AFFAIRS BERNARD GUENNEC SAID THAT LARG FINANCED PURCHASE IN 1972. OF EIGHT BELL RANGER HELICOPTERS FROM YUGOSLAVIA FOR " PALESTINE AIR FORCE". PURCHASE WAS ARRANGED BY UNKNOWN LEBANESE FIRM. HELICOPTERS ARE USED FOR TRAINING 20 PALESTINIAN PILOTS (" ALL YOUNG, VERY INEXPERIENCED") AND 60 PALESTINIAN TECHNICIANS. EFFICIENCY OF UNIT GUENNEC DESCRIBED AS MINIMAL; LARG WAS UNABLE RECRUIT YUGOSLAV OR OTHER FOREIGN TRAINERS BECAUSE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED WERE LEERY OF IDENTIFICATION WITH MILITARY TRAINING OF PALESTINIANS.

2. EARLY IN 1973 PALESTINIAN UNIT, REDUCED TO SEVEN HELICOPTERS AFTER ONE CRASHED, WAS SHIFTED FROM TRIPOLI TO BENGHAZI, GUENNEC SAID. REAL REASON FOR TRANSFER WAS FRICTION BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND LARAF PERSONNEL, BUT REASON LARG GAVE TO PALESTINIANS WAS THAT
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TRIPOLI FACILITIES " TOO CROWDED". UNIT IS UNDER COMMAND
FATAH REPRESENTATIVE IN TRIPOLI.

3. COMMENT: EMBASSY, WHICH CANNOT CONFIRM ABOVE
INFORMATION, WOULD APPRECIATE ANY CORROBORATION ADDRESSEES
MAY BE ABLE PROVIDE WITHOUT REVEALING OUR SOURCE.
JOSIF

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973TRIPOL00317
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: TRIPOLI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730328/aaaahsvn.tel
Line Count: 75
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15-Aug-2001 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <27-Sep-2001 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 971202
Subject: YUGOSLAV ARMS SALES TO " PALESTINIAN AIR FORCE"
TAGS: MASS, MCAP, LY, XF, YO
To: AF
SECSTATE WASHDC INFO BEIRUT
BELGRADE
PARIS
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005